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FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

4th PLENARY MEETING
Tuesday, 27 September 1993 at 10 a.m.

NEW YORK

President: Mr. INSANALLY (Guyana)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9

GENERAL DEBATE

The PRESIDENT: Before calling on the first speaker in the general debate, I should like to remind members of the decision taken by the General Assembly at its 3rd plenary meeting, on 24 September, that congratulations should not be expressed inside the General Assembly Hall itself after a statement has been delivered.

May I also remind members of another decision taken by the Assembly at the same meeting, namely that speakers in the general debate, after delivering their statements, should leave the Assembly Hall through Room GA-200, located behind the podium, before returning to their seats.

I should also like to remind representatives that, in accordance with the decision taken by the General Assembly at its 3rd plenary meeting, the list of speakers will be closed on Wednesday, 29 September 1993, at 6 p.m. May I request delegations to be good enough to provide estimated speaking times that are as accurate as possible so that we can plan our meetings in an orderly fashion.

Mr. AMORIM (Brazil) (*spoke in Portuguese; English text furnished by the delegation*): It is with great pleasure that I congratulate you, Sir, and the Republic of Guyana, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. In so doing, I wish to reaffirm the traditional ties of friendship between Brazil and Guyana. I am certain that you will contribute to making this session of the General Assembly a landmark in the path towards progress and democracy among nations.

I would also like to express to Mr. Stoyan Ganev, respected jurist from the Republic of Bulgaria and President of the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session, our recognition for the work he accomplished.

The strong and innovative leadership provided by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali will continue to be a factor in furthering the work of our Organization.

At the opening of the debate at this forty-eighth session of the General Assembly, we are, once again, being swept by the winds of change. A fresh breeze, bringing us the message that understanding and peace may finally prevail over selfish interest, is blowing from the Near East, cradle of some of the most valuable moral lessons on which our planetary civilization is built.

Man's adventure on Earth, driven by reason and by dreams, has unfolded within the tension between self-interest and solidarity. In the dialectic interaction between solidarity and self-interest which has shaped and continues to shape the destinies of mankind, solidarity has just attained a great victory, allowing us greater optimism about the future and about the possibility of the materialization of the perpetual peace of which Immanuel Kant spoke. Indeed, following the high hopes ushered in by the end of the cold war, we were forced to postpone any exclamations of joy as we witnessed the much-heralded new order

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transform itself into growing disorder, marked by the re-emergence of conflicts rooted in particularisms, which were supposed to be among the closed chapters of history.

We have noticed that the inherent preoccupations of the cold war have shifted from an East-West axis to a North-South orientation. New concepts have been used to justify discriminatory acts with repercussions for the countries of the South. Some of these concepts were presented under the cloak of humanitarian or moral values, such as the so-called "right of intervention" and "good governance"; others are renewed versions of old practices, such as eco-protectionism. At the same time, the countries of the North tightened their controls on the entry of dispossessed people from the South, many of whom came from former colonies. Thus, peace of mind was to be preserved along with the exclusive privileges of post-industrial society. At the same time, just when they were enjoying new heights of freedom, some of the peoples formerly subjected to authoritarian rule were carried away in nationalistic exaltation, the consequences of which continue to parade before spectators who are as shocked as they are powerless.

It was as "glad tidings", in an almost Biblical sense, that the world welcomed the news that peace and understanding were possible in a region marked up to now by pain and conflict. The handshake between Mr. Yitzhak Rabin and Mr. Yasser Arafat is emblematic of the close of this century, a symbol indicating that history is not over, as some have suggested, but rather that it is just beginning, after a long, dark and turbulent pre-history, in which the mark of Cain has always prevailed over the profound desire for lasting peace felt by all peoples.

In this same spirit, I reiterate the solidarity of Brazil with the Russian people, who continue to face the challenges of the process of democratic transition, which we are confident will succeed in their country.

It is therefore with renewed faith in the ability of mankind to find solutions to the problems it continuously creates for itself that we begin our work at this forty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

Exactly thirty years ago, another Minister of External Relations of Brazil, a career diplomat like myself, Ambassador João Augusto de Araujo Castro, pointed out that the task of the United Nations could be summed up in what he called the "3 D's": Disarmament, Development, Decolonization. Today, with the virtual elimination of the last remnants of colonialism, I could paraphrase him by stating that the international agenda is once again structured around three "D's": Democracy, Development, Disarmament, with their ramifications in the areas of human rights, the environment and international security.

The changes we have witnessed have not been limited to the international sphere. Ethical advancements have also been made in the domestic sphere of countries, where ethics have prevailed over the petty interplay of interests which usually makes up day-to-day politics and which leads so many young people to disbelief and to turn away from the ideal of citizenship, without which man cannot fully realize his calling as a social being. I believe that I can proudly assert that my country, Brazil, despite the inherent problems of underdevelopment, has placed itself at the forefront of this "ethicalization" of political relations, which goes far beyond the almost bureaucratic concept of "good governance".

We can still hear the echoes - and the world's most important opinion makers did not fail to register them - of the resounding popular campaign which, in perfect harmony with the legislative and judiciary branches of the Brazilian Government, led to the impeachment of a president. Through an exclusively internal process, which emerged and developed within the Brazilian people and their legitimate representatives, a rarely seen lesson in citizenship was given, by the use of a legal instrument which, though present in other countries, had never been implemented to its ultimate consequences as it was in Brazil. In this process the Brazilian people counted on the support of a press which, with courage and boldness, put to good use the freedom it was once again enjoying after two decades of authoritarian rule.

Mr. Marker (Pakistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

It is with justifiable pride that I am able to state, before this world assembly, that Brazil has etched a mark - and not a minor one - in the evolution of political institutions. I am certain that the peaceful and strictly legal and constitutional manner in which this transition took place in Brazil will be a necessary reference in books that may come to be written about the history of democracy in our time. I would like to stress that the process which led to this feat - and a feat indeed it was - was set in motion and ran its course neither as the product of any form of external pressure, nor in response to any action inspired by standards of governance imposed from outside, but solely and exclusively as the result of the

deepest sense of citizenship shared by Brazilians of every social class.

Since taking office, President Itamar Franco has imposed upon himself and upon the Government he leads absolute respect for the Constitution and for the laws of the country and, above all, for the unchanging principles of law and ethics. Among the constitutional rights of the human being and of the citizen are those laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which our Constitution incorporates and expands upon. Ensuring respect for those rights - in protecting indigenous populations, in safeguarding children and families, in guaranteeing political freedom and access to justice - has been the determined policy of the current Government, and is the challenge we face after a long period in which economic growth and social development did not tread convergent paths.

Within an atmosphere of freedom in which the project of building an open democratic and pluralistic society is moving forward, we are seeking to solve our macro-economic problems while steering clear of the authoritarian temptation of recourse to technocratic formulas based on closed decision-making structures. Although it may seem, on occasion, more efficient, technocracy tends too frequently to impose excessive sacrifices on the poorest and most vulnerable sectors of the population. The road we are following - that the Government of President Itamar Franco is following - is another, perhaps more complex and arduous one, but certainly one that is more democratic and more capable of leading to consensual and sustainable results.

The Brazilian Government and society are both aware that the difficult issues we are confronted with in the area of human rights are deeply intertwined with the social imbalances inherited from decades of insensitivity rooted in authoritarian rule. Democracy, human rights and development make up another indissoluble triad. None of those terms can be brought to complete fruition in the absence of the other two; that is why the Brazilian Government attaches such importance to the resumption of growth and the expansion of employment along with a fairer distribution of income, the only solid and sustainable basis with which to ensure social development and the full realization of human rights. That is also the reason for the importance attached to programmes, such as the programme to combat hunger, which have emerged in our society and which can count on the full and resolute support of the Government.

We know only too well, however, that problems in the area of human rights - to which recent incidents that shocked Brazilian society and the world bear witness - cannot wait for development to be consolidated and for welfare to reach all of society. At the same time as we seek to solve them radically - that is, by attacking their social and economic roots - we must also attend to the more immediate aspects. To this end, the Government is determined to act, at different levels, under the inspiration and the guidance of the President, who is personally committed to this task.

Transparency in the decisions and actions of the Government constitutes an important aspect of Brazilian politics. Such transparency manifests itself in, among other actions, the fluid and cooperative dialogue maintained with segments and organizations of society dedicated to the struggle for the observance of human rights in the country. This open and constructive spirit is not restricted, by the way, within our own borders: we seek and maintain cooperation on issues related to human rights with other countries, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, with which we are devising new methods of action for safeguarding the rule of law and in favour of the adequate protection of human rights on the basis of mutual respect.

We do not disregard the fact that impunity may turn out to be the Achilles' heel of any policy aimed at the full implementation of human rights and the elimination of violence. For this reason, the President has personally determined measures - whose implementation he has been following - for every case in which the human rights of children, of indigenous populations, of women or of any citizen have been violated. In this endeavour, he has the support of Brazilian society, which will not tolerate impunity as it did not tolerate corruption and the breach of ethical standards in politics.

With specific reference to indigenous populations, we are currently proceeding with the necessary strengthening of the Government's presence in the Amazon region in order to protect simultaneously the population and the environment, both of which are frequently exposed to predatory activities; these result from an encounter of civilizations that began five centuries ago and extends up to today.

Here again, the dialectics of solidarity and self-interest are at work; the increased effectiveness of actions undertaken by the Brazilian Government in the Amazon region, in conformity with the full and irrevocable exercise

of our sovereignty, is fundamental if we are to ensure the protection and defence of all the region's inhabitants and, in particular, those of the Brazilian indigenous protected areas, which amount to the impressive total of over 800,000 square kilometres.

The special importance we attach to human rights in the domestic sphere is also reflected in our diplomatic action, as was evidenced at the World Conference held in Vienna last June. The nomination of Brazil to chair the drafting committee of the Conference was both an honour and a challenge; we offered our collaboration with satisfaction with a view to the Vienna consensus being expressed at the highest and most democratic level. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action constitute a significant advance in the promotion and protection of human rights, including by refining concepts now unquestionably acknowledged as universal. By reaffirming the interdependence of all human rights, all of which require equal protection, the Declaration recognizes that individual rights become little more than legal fiction if the bearers of such rights and the States which must guarantee them lack the material resources with which to ensure them.

The promotion and the defence of the democratic regime inside each country are not sufficient: a vigorous effort of democratization of international relations is essential, in conformity with two notable phenomena of current times: the wide consensus on the advantages of representative democracy and the growing linkage between the domestic and the international spheres. This twofold perception leads us of necessity to the recognition that the democratic ideal is applicable with equal validity to relations between nations.

We note with satisfaction the establishment of a virtual consensus on the need to update the composition of the Security Council. It is our understanding that the growing role of the Council in matters which affect the fundamental interests of Member States corresponds to the need to ensure a more representative composition, and so enhance the Council's legitimacy and its efficiency. The reform of the Council must be achieved in such a way as not to aggravate further the imbalance between developed and developing countries in the decision-making process of the United Nations. The General Assembly, as the definitive democratic organ within the United Nations system, must play a decisive role in shaping that process.

The democratization of relations between nations demands that the international order protect them and guarantee their rights against illicit acts and abuses of power. There can be no democratic society if the rule of law is not strictly observed and if the less powerful are not sheltered from arbitrary acts by those who wield force and power. In today's world, it is no longer admissible to say, in the words of Pascal's well-known aphorism, that "as it was not possible to make the righteous mighty, the mighty were made righteous".

The material progress of peoples is to a large extent the product of their own, irreplaceable efforts. It is beyond doubt, however, that such progress is contingent upon the prevalence of a favourable external environment. It is therefore imperative that international society, acting in solidarity, encourage the creation of conditions for progress, not for the preservation of privilege.

Apart from its intrinsic importance, the development of all nations is the only factor that can genuinely reduce the imbalances that are so patently expressed, for instance, in the growing flow of migrants and refugees. In a global society, social justice becomes an indispensable condition for preventing crises, for alleviating tension, for consolidating democracy and for promoting human rights.

If we are to undertake a wide-ranging exercise of preventive diplomacy we must realize that only socially and environmentally sustainable economic development provides an effective means to accomplish our goals.

In the pursuit of development the United Nations has a fundamental role to play. We must make sure that the Organization will act urgently to impart renewed life to its commitment to development and, therefore, also its capacities in the economic and social field. Imbued with this hope, Brazil has supported and continues to support vigorously the initiative of an agenda for development. We are confident that the Secretary-General will present us with a proposal that will be no less innovative, bold and rich in ideas than was "An Agenda for Peace".

Similarly, great store is set by the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development. Brazil expects the Commission to be an effective tool for putting into effect the commitments undertaken in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

In the same vein we give our wholehearted support to the holding of the World Summit for Social Development, a most timely initiative of the Government of Chile, a country to which we are linked by close ties of South American brotherhood and partnership in the Rio Group.

We should not however be misguided by illusions. Only a dynamic insertion in the cross-currents of trade and technology will allow developing countries to reap their fair share of the fruits of progress. To that end we advocate a strengthened multilateral trading system that can guarantee both an adequate reward for our effort at trade liberalization and a normative framework to discourage protectionism and unilateral measures. Today that entails the need for a prompt and balanced conclusion of the Uruguay Round, without discrimination or impositions. The significance of the Uruguay Round projects far beyond its strictly commercial aspects. Its successful outcome will be instrumental in framing an international order that is open and propitious for cooperation, thus preventing a splintering of economic relations into self-contained blocs.

The vigorous involvement of the community of nations in the pursuit of development must be consonant with the principle of State sovereignty. Brazil views the sovereign nation-State as the basis for the legal and political international order. It must not be weakened lest we undermine the very basis of international representation and of the multilateral system. Attempts to play down the principle of national sovereignty - which incidentally are hardly ever targeted at the more powerful States - would be a step backwards in the effort towards more democratic international relations. At a moment when we are building the future multilateral system we should not allow differences in power among nations to replace the sovereign equality of States. The warning sounded by Ruy Barbosa, the distinguished Brazilian jurist and statesman, at the Second Peace Conference of the Hague in 1907, remains fully valid. In discussing the composition of the Permanent Court of Arbitration he stressed that if certain proposals were to prevail, then:

> "The great Powers would no longer be more formidable only as a result of the strength of their armies or of their fleets. They would also enjoy a superior legal status in the international judicial forum, thus claiming a privileged situation in the very institution to which the administration of justice among nations is to be entrusted."

The international order we seek to build rests also on a third pillar, that of disarmament. Brazil, along with its neighbours and partners in Latin America, particularly Argentina, has been making an important contribution to advancing disarmament and international security.

The revision of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the establishment and work of the Brazil-Argentina Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Material (ABACC) and the Quadripartite Agreement on International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Safeguards, which have just been approved by the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies, thus meeting an important requirement for ratification, provide the international community with the guarantees of our commitment to the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

We reaffirm our support for the non-proliferation, in all its forms, of weapons of mass destruction. In relation to chemical weapons, we, with Chile and Argentina, have already signed the Mendoza Declaration in which we solemnly renounced the possession and production of such weapons. We were equally active participants in the process that led to the adoption of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, signed in Paris early this year.

We are gratified by the current observance, although on a somewhat fragile basis, of a moratorium on nuclear tests. We hope that the climate resulting from this moratorium will bring forth the early conclusion, through multilateral negotiations, of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

Brazil, as is well known, has been participating in a clearly positive and transparent way in the process of establishing the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

Brazil's experience in the field of peace-building and confidence-building is noteworthy. Brazil shares almost 17,000 kilometres of land borders with 10 different neighbouring countries. No other nation has had uninterrupted relations of peace and cooperation for so long and with so many neighbouring States. Very few countries spend as little on arms - as a percentage of national product - as Brazil.

At the same time Brazil does not renounce its right to maintain, in good harmony with its neighbours and partners, an adequate and legitimate defence capacity. Nor does it renounce its right to have access to technology necessary for the well-being of the Brazilian people.

By undertaking firm and unambiguous commitments in the field of non-proliferation and disarmament, Brazil believes it is entitled to expect from its more developed partners unimpeded access to high technology, if necessary on a commercial basis.

Recent history gives proof that, despite persistent and serious shortcomings, United Nations peace-keeping operations are important for overcoming situations of conflict, some of which are quite old, complex and delicate. The need for an improved conceptual framework for peace-keeping operations must be kept under constant review by the General Assembly. It is expected that the United Nations will contribute with sober effectiveness to maintaining peace and security wherever they may be threatened. Brazil currently participates with a significant contingent of military observers in United Nations peace-keeping efforts. We intend to expand our presence in this field and we are actively examining ways and means to do this.

Within that context it is essential to rectify the serious political and strategic mistake of envisaging the South as an area of international instability. Quite the contrary, various regions such as Latin America provide examples of stable relations of cooperation based on mutual trust, as illustrated by the vigorous processes of Latin American integration which, far beyond their mercantile aspects, are the material expression of a political project aimed at international cooperation and solidarity. Such processes, including that of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR), are in stark contrast with the trends of fragmentation seen in other parts of the world.

Yet another clear demonstration of the potential for cooperation is taking shape in the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries. Far more than a means of expression, "lusiphonia" is the hallmark of a frame of mind, a form of being, a way of life predicated on tolerance and open relations among different peoples.

The Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic reinforces our links to sister nations in Africa. The enhancement of political and economic relations within the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic is a goal towards which we are determined to work, having regard, among other issues, to the constitution of a vast area free of the nuclear threat. We furthermore expect to have the pleasure of celebrating the full admission to the South Atlantic community of a democratic and united South Africa, free forever from the scourge of racism.

The historic speech delivered by Mr. Nelson Mandela just a few days ago from this same rostrum warrants the expectation and confirms the idea that in spite of remaining obstacles the process of democratization in South Africa is now irreversible.

We are forced to admit that serious areas of tension continue to exist in the world. By virtue of our historical ties of friendship, cooperation and cultural kinship with Angola, the situation in that country is of particular concern to us. The international community, through the United Nations, has a fundamental role to play in the defence of democracy in Angola and in the utter rejection of the use of force as a means of achieving political gains. Peace must prevail in Angola in full compliance with the Bicesse Accords and all the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

We remain gravely concerned about the situation of human rights and democracy in Haiti. The prospect for a prompt solution to the crisis in that country is high on our agenda. We look forward to the return of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide on 30 October.

The restoration of peace in the former Yugoslavia is a priority for the international community in order to bring to an end the suffering of the populations involved in that conflict. A willingness to achieve agreements acceptable to all parties must prevail in Geneva, as in the capitals of the former federation. That willingness alone can enable the United Nations to play its irreplaceable role in bringing peace to that region.

Our example, and our response to these challenges, will frame the future order to which we all aspire: an order that is democratic, stable, disarmed and committed to the material and spiritual development of all nations.

The humanistic vision that inspires us was forcefully expressed by a Brazilian poet and diplomat, João Cabral de Melo Neto, in these words:

"Learn this: that man is the best measure always,

And more: that life, not death, is the measure of man."

The President returned to the Chair.

The meeting was suspended at 10.55 a.m. and resumed at 11 a.m.

ADDRESS BY MR. WILLIAM J. CLINTON, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the United States of America.

Mr. William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly I have the great honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the United States of America, His Excellency Mr. William Clinton, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President CLINTON: Let me first congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly for this session.

Mr. Secretary-General, distinguished representatives and guests, it is a great honour for me to address you and to stand in this great Hall, which symbolizes so much of the twentieth century - its darkest crises and its brightest aspirations.

I come before you as the first American President born after the founding of the United Nations. Like most of the people in the world today, I was not even alive during the convulsive world war that convinced humankind of the need for this Organization, nor during the San Francisco Conference that led to its birth. Yet I have followed the work of the United Nations throughout my life, with admiration for its accomplishments, sadness for its failures and the conviction that, through common effort, our generation can take the bold steps needed to redeem the mission entrusted to the United Nations 48 years ago. I pledge to you that my nation remains committed to helping make the United Nations vision a reality.

The start of this session of the General Assembly offers us an opportunity to take stock of where we are as common shareholders in the progress of humankind and the preservation of our planet. It is clear that we live at a turning point in human history.

Immense and promising changes seem to wash over us every day. The cold war is over. The world is no longer divided into two armed and angry camps. Dozens of new democracies have been born.

It is a moment of miracles. We see Nelson Mandela stand side by side with President de Klerk proclaiming a date for South Africa's first non-racial elections.

We see Russia's first popularly elected President, Boris Yeltsin, leading his nation on its bold democratic journey.

We have seen decades of deadlock shattered in the Middle East as the Prime Minister of Israel and the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization reached past enmity and suspicion to shake each other's hand and exhilarate the entire world with the hope of peace.

We have begun to see the doomsday weapons of nuclear annihilation dismantled and destroyed. Thirty-two years ago President Kennedy warned this Assembly that humanity lived under a nuclear sword of Damocles that hung by the slenderest of threads. Now the United States is working with Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and others to take that sword down, to lock it away in a secure vault, where we hope and pray it will remain for ever.

It is a new era in this Hall as well. The super-Power standoff that for so long stymied the work of the United Nations, almost from its first day, has now yielded to a new promise of practical cooperation.

Yet today we must all admit that there are two powerful tendencies working from opposite directions to challenge the authority of nation States everywhere and to undermine the authority of nation States to work together. From beyond nations, economic and technological forces all over the globe are compelling the world towards integration. These forces are fuelling a welcome explosion of entrepreneurship and political liberalization. But they also threaten to destroy the insularity and independence of national economies, quickening the pace of change and making many of our people feel more insecure. At the same time, from within nations, the resurgent aspirations of ethnic and religious groups challenge Governments on terms that traditional nation States cannot easily accommodate. These twin forces lie at the heart of the challenges, not only to our national Governments, but also to all our international institutions. They require all of us in this Hall to find new ways to work together more effectively in pursuit of our national interests and to think anew about whether our institutions of international cooperation are adequate to this moment.

Thus, as we marvel at this era's promise of new peace, we must also recognize that serious threats remain.

Bloody ethnic, religious and civil wars rage from Angola to the Caucasus to Kashmir. As weapons of mass destruction fall into more hands, even small conflicts can threaten to take on murderous proportions. Hunger and disease continue to take a tragic toll, especially among the world's children. The malignant neglect of our global environment threatens our children's health and their very security. The repression of conscience continues in too many nations. And terrorism, which has taken so many innocent lives, assumed a horrifying immediacy for us here when militant fanatics bombed the World Trade Center and planned to attack even this very Hall of peace.

Let me assure the Assembly that whether they be the plotters of those crimes or the mass murderers who bombed Pan Am flight 103, my Government is determined to see that such terrorists are brought to justice.

At this moment of panoramic change, of vast opportunities and troubling threats, we must all ask ourselves what we can and what we should do as a community of nations. We must once again dare to dream of what might be, for our dreams may be within our reach.

For that to happen, we must all be willing honestly to confront the challenges of the broader world. That has never been easy. When this Organization was founded 48 years ago, the world's nations stood devastated by war or exhausted by its expense. There was little appetite for cooperative efforts among nations; most people simply wanted to get on with their lives. But a far-sighted generation of leaders from the United States and elsewhere rallied the world. Their efforts built the institutions of post-war security and prosperity.

We are at a similar moment today. The momentum of the cold war no longer propels us in our daily actions. And with daunting economic and political pressures upon almost every nation represented in this room, many of us are turning to focus greater attention and energy on domestic needs and problems, and we must.

But putting each of our economic houses in order cannot mean that we shut our windows to the world. The pursuit of self-renewal in many of the world's largest and most powerful economies - in Europe, in Japan, in North America - is absolutely crucial, because unless the great industrial nations can recapture their robust economic growth, the global economy will languish. Yet the industrial nations also need growth elsewhere in order to lift their own. Indeed, prosperity in each of our nations and regions also depends on active and responsible engagement in a host of shared concerns: for example, a thriving and democratic Russia not only makes the world safer, it also can help to expand the world's economy; a strong GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) agreement will create millions of jobs world wide; peace in the Middle East, buttressed as it should be by the repeal of outdated United Nations resolutions, can help to unleash that region's great economic potential and calm a perpetual source of tension in global affairs; and the growing economic power of China - coupled with greater political openness - could bring enormous benefits to all of Asia and to the rest of the world.

We must help our publics to understand this distinction: domestic renewal is an overdue tonic; but isolationism and protectionism are still poison. We must inspire our peoples to look beyond their immediate fears towards a broader horizon.

Let me start by being clear about where the United States stands. The United States occupies a unique position in world affairs today: we recognize that and we welcome it. Yet, with the cold war over, I know many people ask whether the United States plans to retreat or remain active in the world; and if active, to what end? Many people are asking that in our own country as well.

Let me answer that question as clearly and plainly as I can. The United States intends to remain engaged and to lead. We cannot solve every problem, but we must and will serve as a fulcrum for change and a pivot point for peace.

In a new era of peril and opportunity, our overriding purpose must be to expand and strengthen the world's community of market-based democracies. During the cold war, we sought to contain a threat to the survival of free institutions; now we seek to enlarge the circle of nations that live under those free institutions.

For our dream is of a day when the opinions and energies of every person in the world will be given full expression, in a world of thriving democracies that cooperate with each other and live in peace.

With this statement, I do not mean to announce some crusade to force our way of life and doing things on others or to replicate our institutions. But we now know clearly that throughout the world, from Poland to Eritrea, from Guatemala to South Korea, there is an enormous yearning among people who wish to be the masters of their own economic and political lives. Where it matters most and

where we can make the greatest difference, we will therefore patiently and firmly align ourselves with that yearning.

Today, there are still those who claim that democracy is simply not applicable to many cultures and that its recent expansion is an aberration, an accident in history that will soon fade away. But I agree with President Roosevelt, who once said: "The democratic aspiration is no mere recent phase of human history. It is human history."

We will work to strengthen the free market democracies by revitalizing our economy at home, by opening world trade through GATT, the North American Free Trade Agreement and other accords, and by updating our shared institutions, asking with you and answering the hard questions about whether they are adequate to the present challenges.

We will support the consolidation of market democracy where it is taking new root, as in the States of the former Soviet Union and all over Latin America, and we seek to foster the practices of good government that distribute the benefits of democracy and economic growth fairly to all people.

We will work to reduce the threat from regimes that are hostile to democracy and to support liberalization of non-democratic States when they are willing to live in peace with the rest of us. As a country that has over 150 racial, ethnic and religious groups within our borders, our policy is and must be rooted in a profound respect for all the world's religions and cultures. But we must oppose everywhere extremism that produces terrorism and hate.

And we must pursue our humanitarian goals of reducing suffering, fostering sustainable development and improving health and living conditions, particularly for our world's children.

On efforts from export controls to trade agreements to peace-keeping, we will often work in partnership with others and through multilateral institutions such as the United Nations. It is in our national interest to do so. But we must not hesitate to act unilaterally when there is a threat to our core interests or to those of our allies.

The United States believes that an expanding community of market democracies not only serves our own security interests, it also advances the goals enshrined in this body's Charter and its Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

For broadly based prosperity is clearly the strongest form of preventive diplomacy, and the habits of democracy are the habits of peace. Democracy is rooted in compromise, not conquest. It rewards tolerance, not hatred. Democracies rarely wage war on one another. They make more reliable partners in trade, in diplomacy, and in the stewardship of our global environment. And democracies, with the rule of law and respect for political, religious and cultural minorities, are more responsive to their own people and to the protection of human rights.

But as we work towards this vision, we must confront the storm clouds that may overwhelm our work and darken the march towards freedom.

If we do not stem the proliferation of the world's deadliest weapons, no democracy can feel secure.

If we do not strengthen the capacity to resolve conflicts among and within nations, those conflicts will smother the birth of free institutions, threaten the development of entire regions and continue to take innocent lives.

If we do not nurture our people and our planet through sustainable development, we will deepen conflict and waste the very wonders that make our efforts worth doing.

Let me talk more about what I believe we must do in each of these three categories: non-proliferation, conflict resolution and sustainable development.

One of our most urgent priorities must be attacking the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction - whether nuclear, chemical or biological - and the ballistic missiles that can rain them down on populations hundreds of miles away.

We know this is not an idle problem. All of us are still haunted by the pictures of Kurdish women and children cut down by poison gas. We saw SCUD missiles drop during the Gulf War that would have been far graver in their consequences if they had carried nuclear weapons. And we know that many nations still believe it is in their interests to develop weapons of mass destruction or to sell them or the necessary technologies to others for financial gain.

More than a score of nations likely possess such weapons and their number threatens to grow. These weapons destabilize entire regions. They could turn a local conflict into a global human and environmental catastrophe. We simply have got to find ways to control these weapons and to reduce the number of States that possess them by supporting and strengthening the International Atomic Energy Agency and by taking other necessary measures.

I have made non-proliferation one of our nation's highest priorities. We intend to weave it more deeply into the fabric of all of our relationships with the world's nations and institutions. We seek to build a world of increasing pressure for non-proliferation but increasingly open trade and technology for those States that live by accepted international rules.

Today, let me describe several new policies that our Government will pursue to stem proliferation. We will pursue new steps to control the materials for nuclear weapons. Growing global stockpiles of plutonium and highly enriched uranium are raising the danger of nuclear terrorism for all nations. We will press for an international agreement that would ban production of these materials for weapons for ever.

As we reduce our nuclear stockpiles, the United States has also begun negotiations towards a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing. This summer I declared that to facilitate those negotiations, our nation would suspend our testing if all other nuclear States would do the same. Today, in the face of disturbing signs, I renew my call on the nuclear States to abide by that moratorium as we negotiate to stop nuclear testing for all time.

I am also proposing new efforts to fight the proliferation of biological and chemical weapons. Today, only a handful of nations has ratified the chemical weapons Convention. I call on all nations - including my own - to ratify this accord quickly so that it may enter into force by 13 January 1995. We will also seek to strengthen the biological weapons Convention by making every nation's biological activities and facilities open to more international scrutiny.

I am proposing as well new steps to thwart the proliferation of ballistic missiles. Recently, working with Russia, Argentina, Hungary and South Africa, we have made significant progress toward that goal. Now we will seek to strengthen the principles of the Missile Technology Control Regime by transforming it from an agreement on technology transfer among just 23 nations into a set of rules that can command universal adherence.

We will also reform our own system of export controls in the United States to reflect the realities of the post-cold-war world, where we seek to enlist the support of our former adversaries in the battle against proliferation. At the same time as we stop deadly technologies from falling into the wrong hands, we will work with our partners to remove outdated controls that unfairly burden legitimate commerce and unduly restrain growth and opportunity all over the world.

As we work to keep the world's most destructive weapons out of conflicts, we must also strengthen the international community's ability to address those conflicts themselves. For as we all now know so painfully, the end of the cold war did not bring us to the millennium of peace. Indeed, it simply removed the lid from many cauldrons of ethnic, religious and territorial animosity.

The philosopher Isaiah Berlin has said that a wounded nationalism is like a bent twig, forced down so severely that when released, it lashes back with fury. The world today is thick with both bent and recoiling twigs of wounded communal identities. This surge of bitter conflicts has placed high demands on the United Nations peace-keeping forces. Frequently, the Blue Helmets have worked wonders. In Namibia, El Salvador, the Golan Heights and elsewhere, United Nations peace-keepers have helped to stop the fighting, restore civil authority and enable free elections. In Bosnia, United Nations peace-keepers, against the danger and frustration of that continuing tragedy, have maintained a valiant humanitarian effort. And if the parties to that conflict take the hard steps needed to make a real peace, the international community - including the United States - must be ready to help in its effective implementation.

In Somalia, the United States and the United Nations have worked together to achieve a stunning humanitarian rescue, saving literally hundreds of thousands of lives and restoring conditions of security to almost the entire country. United Nations peace-keepers from over two dozen nations remain in Somalia today - and some, including brave Americans, have lost their lives - to ensure that we complete our mission and that anarchy and starvation do not return just as quickly as they were abolished.

Many still criticize United Nations peace-keeping, but those who do should talk to the people of Cambodia,

where the United Nations operations helped turn the killing fields into fertile soil for reconciliation. Last May's elections in Cambodia marked a proud accomplishment for that war-weary nation and for the United Nations. And I am pleased to announce that the United States has recognized Cambodia's new Government.

United Nations peace-keeping holds the promise to resolve many of this era's conflicts. But the reason we have supported such missions is not, as some critics in the United States have charged, to subcontract American foreign policy, but to strengthen our security, to protect our interests, and to share among nations the costs and effort of pursuing peace. Peace-keeping cannot be a substitute for our own national defence efforts, but it can strongly supplement them.

Today there is wide recognition that the United Nations peace-keeping ability has not kept pace with its rising responsibilities and challenges. Just six years ago, about 10,000 United Nations peace-keepers were stationed around the world. Today the United Nations has some 80,000 deployed in 17 operations on four continents. Yet until recently, if a peace-keeping commander called in from across the globe when it was night-time here in New York, there was no one in the peace-keeping office even to answer the call. When lives are on the line, we cannot let the reach of the United Nations exceed its grasp.

As the Secretary-General and others have argued, if United Nations peace-keeping is to be a sound security investment for our nation and for other United Nations Members, it must adapt to new times. Together, we must prepare United Nations peace-keeping for the twenty-first century. We need to begin by bringing the rigours of military and political analysis to every United Nations peace mission. In recent weeks in the Security Council, our nation has begun asking harder questions about proposals for new peace-keeping missions. Is there a real threat to international peace? Does the proposed mission have clear objectives? Can an end point be identified for those who will be asked to participate? How much will the mission cost? From now on the United Nations should address these and other questions for every proposed mission before we vote and before the mission begins. The United Nations simply cannot become engaged in every one of the world's conflicts. If the American people are to say "Yes" to United Nations peace-keeping, the United Nations must know when to say "No".

The United Nations also must have the technical means to run a modern, world-class peace-keeping operation. We support the creation of a genuine United Nations peace-keeping headquarters with a planning staff; with access to timely intelligence; with a logistics unit that can be deployed on a moment's notice; and with a modern operations centre with global communications.

United Nations operations must not only be adequately funded but also fairly funded. Within the next few weeks, the United States will be current on our peace-keeping bills. I have worked hard with the Congress to get this done. I believe the United States should lead the way in being timely in its payments, and I will work to ensure that we continue to pay our peace-keeping bills in full. But I am also committed to working with the United Nations to reduce our nation's assessment for these missions. The assessment system has not been changed since 1973, and everyone in our country knows that our percentage of the world's economic pie is not as great as it was then. Therefore, I believe our rate should be reduced to reflect the rise of other nations that can now bear more of the financial burden. That will make it easier for me as President to make sure my country pays in a timely and full fashion.

Changes in the United Nations peace-keeping operations must be part of an even broader programme of United Nations reform. I say that, again, not to criticize the United Nations but to help improve it. As our Ambassador, Madeleine Albright, has suggested, the United States has always played a twin role in regard to the United Nations: "First friend and first critic."

Today, corporations around the world are finding ways to move from the industrial age into the information age - improving service, reducing bureaucracy and cutting costs. Here in the United States, Vice President Al Gore and I have launched an effort literally to reinvent how our Government operates. We see this going on in other Governments around the world. Now the time has come to reinvent the way the United Nations operates as well.

I applaud the initial steps the Secretary-General has taken to reduce and reform the United Nations bureaucracy. Now we must all do even more to root out waste. Before this General Assembly is over, let us establish a strong mandate for an office of inspector general, so that it can attain a reputation for toughness, for integrity, for effectiveness. Let us build new confidence among our people that the United Nations is changing with the needs of our times.

Ultimately, the key for reforming the United Nations, as for reforming our own government, is to remember why we are here and whom we serve. It is well to recall that the first words of the United Nations Charter are not, "We the Governments", but "We the peoples of the United Nations". That means, in every country, the teachers, the workers, the farmers, the professionals, the fathers, the mothers, the children, from the most remote village in the world to the largest metropolis - they are why we gather in this great Hall; it is their futures that are at risk when we act or fail to act; and it is they who ultimately pay our bills.

As we dream new dreams in this age when miracles seem possible, let us focus on the lives of those people, and especially on the children who will inherit this world. Let us work with a new urgency, and imagine what kind of world we could create for them over the coming generation.

Let us work with new energy to protect the world's people from torture and repression. As Secretary of State Christopher stressed at the recent Vienna Conference, human rights are not something conditional, bounded by culture but, rather, something universal, granted by God. This General Assembly should create, at long last, a high commissioner for human rights. I hope it will do this soon, and with vigour and energy and conviction.

Let us also work far more ambitiously to fulfil our obligations as custodians of this planet, not only to improve the quality of life for our citizens and the quality of our air, water and the earth itself, but also because the roots of conflict are so often entangled with the roots of environmental neglect and the calamities of famine and disease.

During the course of our campaign in the United States last year, Vice President Gore and I promised the American people major changes in our nation's policy towards the global environment. Those were promises to keep, and today the United States is doing so. Today we are working with other nations to build on the promising work of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development. We are working to make sure that all nations meet their commitments under the global climate Convention. We are seeking to complete negotiations on an accord to prevent the world's deserts from further expanding. And we seek to strengthen the World Health Organization's efforts to combat the plague of AIDS, which is not only killing millions, but also exhausting the resources of the nations that can least afford it.

And let us make a new commitment to the world's children. It is tragic enough that one and a half million children have died as a result of wars over the past decade. But it is far more unforgivable that during that same period 40 million children have died from diseases completely preventable with simple vaccines or medicines. Every day - this day, as we meet here - over 30,000 of the world's children will die of malnutrition and disease. As the Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Jim Grant, has reminded me, "each of [those children] had a name and a nationality, a family, a personality and a potential".

We are compelled to do better by the world's children. Just as our own nation has launched new reforms to ensure that every child has adequate health care, we must do more to get basic vaccines and other treatments for curable diseases to children all over the world. It's the best investment we'll ever make. We can find new ways to ensure that every child grows up with clean, drinkable water - that most precious commodity of life itself. And the United Nations can work even harder to ensure that each child has at least a full primary education - and I mean that opportunity for girls as well as boys.

To ensure a healthier and more abundant world, we simply must slow the world's explosive growth in population. We cannot afford to see the human race double by the middle of the next century. Our nation has at last renewed its commitment to work with the United Nations to expand the availability of the world's family planning education and services. We must ensure that there is a place at the table for every one of the world's children. We can do this.

At the birth of this Organization, 48 years ago - another time of both victory and danger - a generation of gifted leaders from many nations stepped forward to organize the world's efforts on behalf of security and prosperity. One American leader during that period said this: "It is time we steered by the stars rather than by the light of each passing ship." His generation picked peace, human dignity and freedom. Those are good stars. They should remain the highest in our firmament.

Now history has granted to us a moment of even greater opportunity, when old dangers are ebbing and old walls are crumbling. Future generations will judge us, every one of us, above all by what we make of this magic moment. Let us resolve that we will dream larger, that we will work harder, so that they can conclude that we did not

merely turn walls to rubble, but instead laid the foundations for great things to come.

Let us ensure that the tide of freedom and democracy is not pushed back by the fierce winds of ethnic hatred. Let us ensure that the world's most dangerous weapons are safely reduced and denied to dangerous hands. Let us ensure that the world we pass to our children is healthier, safer and more abundant than the one we inhabit today. I believe - I know - that together we can extend this moment of miracles into an age of great works and new wonders.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the United States of America for the statement he has just made.

Mr. William Clinton, President of the United States of America, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

The meeting was suspended at 11.20 a.m. and resumed at 12.05 p.m.

ADDRESS BY MR. CÉSAR GAVIRIA TRUJILLO, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Colombia.

Mr. César Gaviria Trujillo, President of the Republic of Colombia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Colombia, His Excellency Mr. César Gaviria Trujillo, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President GAVIRIA TRUJILLO (*interpretation from Spanish*): Nearly all those who stand at this rostrum represent the dreams of their countrymen. Many who come to this Hall bring with them the hopes of their peoples, which have been shattered by violence, intolerance, selfishness or misunderstanding. But all, without exception, bring with them their own vision of the world; the sum of those visions will provide a model for the world in which we live and die and in which our children will live and grow. It is therefore a great honour for me to address once more so many men and women of all origins and all destinies. The world listens expectantly to what we say here, for the world has confidence and faith in the commitment of the United Nations to action on behalf of a better future for all mankind.

Today, as we begin this session, I believe that those of us who have worked for the triumph of peace and democracy are living at a crucial moment. Without doubt, there is room for optimism, but our work is far from done.

The end of bipolarism has not by itself brought the feeling that peace, progress and justice are now nearer or more possible. While bloc confrontation has disappeared, we are seeing the resurgence of harsh ancient nationalisms and fanaticisms that threaten peace and stability, and the presence of extreme poverty and social injustice in the majority of the world's countries.

Even as we meet here, thousands are dying, victims of racism, xenophobia, fratricidal wars, hatreds which have fed on themselves for centuries, territorial disputes, or the simple and terrible inability of mankind to provide everyone with that which all are promised: freedom and equal opportunity.

At the same time, we feel increasing pain at the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in areas of Africa, in many Eastern European nations and in other parts of the world.

During this session we will also hear of hopes and of dreams of peace and reconciliation that until now seemed impossible. I speak, for example, of the gradual abolition of racial segregation in South Africa. I point also to the fact that rivals like Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization have had the courage to declare mutual recognition and respect. That Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat can negotiate with courage and fortitude, amidst their own memories of war, proves that when history is written, the greatness of the human spirit can flourish and prevail.

Although we know that the road ahead is still long and difficult, the Israelis and the Palestinians have the recognition and support of the international community for their efforts to find peace. The agreements reached are further proof that the political will to reconcile is capable of healing even the deepest wounds.

Much of the history of the twentieth century has been written with the blood of victims of war, religious disputes or blind quests for power. Too much history has already been written by tyrants.

The builders of the twenty-first century must be men of peace and work rather than of violence. The arms they use to build the future must not be cannons and bullets, but rather the wisdom, ingenuity and vision of men of initiative.

Political activity, with its great capacity to transform reality, has in a few short years generated far-reaching changes in the former Soviet Union, Central and Eastern Europe, the Middle East and my own region, Latin America. Never before have so many millions of people around the world enjoyed freedom.

We Colombians, for example, have in just a few years achieved significant political, economic and social changes aimed at developing a new democratic century that is more open, more participatory, more pluralistic, more decentralized and more just.

Our new Constitution was conceived with the participation of all sectors of public opinion, including ex-guerrillas, indigenous people, industrialists, human-rights activists, environmentalists and millions of ordinary citizens. Our 1991 Constitution is the navigational chart of a new Colombia heading for the next millennium.

On the economic front, we have replaced our old model of a closed economy with an open one, in which external markets have to become, increasingly, the engines of growth. We are integrating our economy with the world and are hence demanding that other nations open their markets to our products. We are advocates of free enterprise, economic integration and free trade. The results have been very satisfactory: we have diversified and increased our exports, significantly lowered inflation, reduced unemployment and increased economic growth.

On the social front, we have substantially increased public resources available for financing new programmes of investment in our people. With this effort we shall double our present per capita income by the beginning of the next decade. By that time life expectancy in Colombia will be similar to that of many industrialized countries. Our illiteracy rate will be less than 3 per cent and our infant mortality rate will be lower than 18 deaths per thousand births.

In Colombia we understand that political democracy must go hand in hand with economic opportunity, because a lasting true democracy can be achieved only through economic development and social justice. It would be difficult, after all, for people who had fought so hard for freedom to find that the tough road to democracy led to poverty, marginalization or social stagnation. Political freedom with economic opportunity: this is now the definition of democracy.

The developing world has placed its hopes in international trade as the instrument to create prosperity for all. In a global economy it is impossible to achieve social well-being without economic freedom, competition, productivity, efficiency and growth.

Perhaps we now have, more than ever before, the conditions for an unprecedented increase in the flow of goods, services, technology and knowledge between the industrialized countries and the developing countries and, therefore, for economic growth and the creation of employment and social well-being for all.

For these reasons, this hemisphere's liberalization processes, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Andean Group, the Group of Three, the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) and the integration of Central America and the Caribbean, are not just integrative trade agreements, but also represent real remedies for poverty.

I wish to stress the importance of NAFTA as a decisive step in the right direction to liberalize trade relations, to our mutual benefit, between north and south. It is time to leave behind outdated fears and commit ourselves to a relationship that will undoubtedly result in stronger economic growth and hundreds of thousands of new jobs for all. Those of us who are supporters of an integrated, open and dynamic hemispheric economy fully support the visionary efforts of President Bill Clinton to achieve final approval of this treaty.

And on a global scale it is critical to conclude the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) successfully. This will be possible only if we truly respect the multilateral character of that organization. It cannot be a matter of the most powerful agreeing among themselves about what is in their own interests. We hope for the conclusion of the Uruguay Round, but not at any cost. We seek effective solutions to address the concerns of the least developed countries, with emphasis on dismantling agricultural protectionism.

We are deeply concerned that the attitude of many of the principal actors in the global economy has come to resemble dangerously that of another era, the years before the Second World War, when nations isolated themselves

within their borders and produced goods for captive domestic markets.

Defending at any cost the selfish interests of privileged rural minorities in the industrialized countries takes bread off the tables of millions of poor peasants who only want the right to compete on an equal footing. That selfish attitude is the greatest cause of poverty in the poor countries.

We live in a world where frontiers between nations ought to be seen as points of convergence, not of division; where cries for independence should be replaced by shows of interdependence; where, for many developing nations, the euphoria of political change has passed and what is needed is economic growth and the creation of jobs.

Protectionism and isolationism belong to outdated, perverse rhetoric. Do we really want to live in a world turned upside down, where the largest and strongest economies deny the smallest ones the right to compete, or where the origin of goods and services is more important than their quality or value?

The world must see that open markets and free trade are perhaps the best hope for serving the collective interests of both north and south, not simply favours graciously granted to the developing world by the industrialized world. Free trade is truly good business for everyone.

The economies of the developed world are made up for the most part of mature markets that have already experienced their greatest periods of expansion. The short-sightedness of protectionism lies in its ignoring the growth potential represented by investment in and trade with nations that represent the future of the world's economy.

As President of Colombia, I want to reaffirm my nation's commitment to the defence of free trade, for we have invested in it our hopes for development and well-being. So, too, we see in free trade the best contribution that the industrialized world can make to consolidating democracy and freedom in developing countries. Colombia is asking for free trade, not economic aid; the opening of markets, not mere assistance; competition, not insurmountable barriers.

From its inception, the United Nations has had the dual mission of maintaining international peace and security and of promoting the social and economic development of all peoples of the world. Even though we have been successful in advancing collective global security, we cannot say the same as concerns the areas of social welfare and economic development. Today, I call upon the international community to achieve, with courage and dedication, an agenda for development. Only then will the goal of a lasting and stable peace be reached, for without social justice, peace cannot be permanent.

I should like also to mention Colombia's renewed commitment to three issues of great global importance: the defence and promotion of human rights, the fight against organized crime and the preservation of the environment.

In Colombia, we have made a major and successful effort to create a culture that promotes, respects and defends human rights. Today, we have the institutional foundations to ensure that Colombia's society will overcome human rights violations. The efforts to strengthen Colombia's judicial system has borne fruit. We are defeating impunity.

In our fight against international organized crime, which profits from narcotics trafficking, terrorism, money-laundering, arms trafficking, the flow of illegal chemicals and various forms of corruption, my country many years ago took a clear decision: Colombia will not rest until these criminals activities are wiped from the face of our land.

Innocent Colombians are continuing to lose their lives in the fight against evil multinationals. My deepest convictions and my respect for the memory of so many countrymen who have sacrificed their lives compel me to call once again on all nations to contribute to the solution of a problem that is global in its scope.

My people's brave efforts alone - or nearly so - cannot put an end to international organized crime; this will require determined action with courage and political will, on the part of many more nations. We cannot counter sophisticated international organized crime by simply developing national or bilateral strategies. We require a comprehensive, multilateral effort that focuses on legislative cooperation; coordinated initiatives; the exchange of intelligence information; a sufficient commitment of financial and human resources; cooperation in the judicial field; and, perhaps most important, strong political will.

To this end, we will participate with great interest in the high-level meeting that, on our initiative, will soon take place during this plenary session. Its main purpose will be

to review the global strategy against the plague of narcotics trafficking, with a view to seeking coordination of concrete measures, the renewal of specific commitments and, finally, the strengthening of the decision to continue with this joint struggle.

With regard to the preservation of the environment, Colombia is fully aware of the importance of its magnificent, varied and sometimes fragile ecosystems and of its biodiversity. Accordingly, we have adopted institutional changes that will allow us to fulfil in its entirety a commitment that stems not only from our Constitution but also from our collective conscience and our stewardship of a treasure we shall not squander.

Colombia supports sustainable development, respects the terms of the agreements reached at the Earth Summit and is working with its neighbours, with other nations and its own communities to devise strategies that will allow it both to benefit from and to preserve its natural resources.

I wish to conclude by congratulating the President of the General Assembly, the Ambassador of Guyana, Mr. Samuel Insanally, an outstanding representative of my region. We also welcome the new States Members of the United Nations. On behalf of Colombia, we welcome them to this universal fraternity, which is enhanced by their presence.

At the same time, I want publicly to express my country's satisfaction at having coordinated the work of the Group of 77 this year. Thanks to the collaboration and harmony that prevailed among all its members, we made important advances in defence of the interests of the developing world.

But the satisfaction of seeing the United Nations strengthened each year by the presence of new Members should not hinder us from reaffirming Colombia's position in favour of the restructuring of this Organization, especially with regard to reforming the Security Council and to redefining the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council. We hope that in this respect an open and a democratic and multilateral debate will take place.

I have come here today to ask a question that has been on the minds of all peoples, in all parts of the world, who have been on the side of the revolution of freedom: why have so many millions of people in the former Soviet Union, in Central and Eastern Europe, and in countries throughout Asia, Africa and Latin America fought so hard? What is it that so many hoped to achieve by taking, at the cost of immense sacrifices, the road to democracy and its freedoms?

I believe that the only answer is that they have seen, for the first time, the possibility of transforming these dreams into realities. And they have taken that road because they want to a leave a legacy of freedom to their children and to future generations.

With the help of God and our strong solidarity, we are certain that they will prevail.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Colombia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. César Gaviria Trujillo, President of the Republic of Colombia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9 *(continued)*

GENERAL DEBATE

ADDRESS BY MR. MORIHIRO HOSOKAWA, PRIME MINISTER OF JAPAN

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of Japan.

Mr. Morihiro Hosokawa, Prime Minister of Japan, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of Japan, Mr. Morihiro Hosokawa, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. HOSOKAWA: I should like first of all to extend my heartfelt congratulations to you, Mr. President, who also serve as Guyana's Ambassador to Japan, on your election last week to the presidency of this session of the General Assembly. Let me also express my deep appreciation to the previous President, Mr. Ganev, for his achievements during the past year, particularly in pursuing General Assembly reforms.

I want to take this opportunity to commend Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali for his selfless devotion

to the cause of global peace and for his bold efforts towards United Nations reform.

Finally, I warmly welcome the representatives of the six new Member States that have joined the United Nations over the past year.

In Japan, the reins of government recently changed hands for the first time in 38 years. The coalition government that emerged has appointed me Prime Minister. Political changes in Japan are part of the dramatic changes in the international community since the end of the East-West confrontation. The post-cold-war era has opened, not just a new page, but a whole new chapter in Japanese politics. This means an era of basic reform in three main areas, namely, political, economic and administrative reforms. I believe these reforms are vital in strengthening Japan's bonds with the international community.

As I devote my attention and energy to these domestic reforms I have come to the United Nations General Assembly on my first official visit abroad. I have done so because Japan believes that the United Nations has a crucial role to play in the maintenance of international peace and security. I also wished personally to convey Japan's determination to contribute, both financially and in terms of personnel, to various United Nations efforts.

Further, I wish to state again that Japan continues to feel a sense of remorse over its past actions and that it is firmly resolved to make further contributions to the goals of world peace and prosperity.

As for the current situation in Russia, Japan continues to support President Yeltsin in his reform efforts. Japan strongly hopes that a political environment which reflects the will of the Russian people will soon be created and that the reforms will be further promoted.

Today, the primary objective of the United Nations and its Member States is to establish world peace on the basis of the universal principles of freedom, democracy and respect for human rights.

There are four areas in which the international community must direct its greatest efforts in pursuit of this objective.

I shall begin with the issue of disarmament. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the centre-piece of efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. I wish to affirm that Japan supports the indefinite extension of that Treaty beyond 1995. It is critically important that countries which have not yet acceded to the Treaty do so to enhance its universality. At the same time, the indefinite extension of the NPT should not mean the perpetuation of the possession of nuclear weapons by the nuclear-weapon States.

Japan thus welcomes the progress made towards nuclear disarmament by the United States and Russia and emphasizes that all nuclear-weapon States must work in earnest to achieve further progress in nuclear disarmament. We hail the decision to commence substantive negotiations aimed at a comprehensive nuclear test-ban. For its part, Japan will work actively to help reduce world stockpiles of nuclear weapons. For example, we are ready to assist in the dismantling of nuclear weapons in the former Soviet Union. We also strongly urge North Korea to dispel international concern about its development of nuclear weapons by, for example, fully implementing the safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

On the transfer of conventional arms, the effective implementation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is essential. I strongly urge all nations to participate in this endeavour. In extending its official development assistance, Japan continues to pay full attention to such trends as military expenditures in recipient nations.

The second point I wish to make is the importance of diplomatic efforts in the prevention of conflicts. The value of regional security arrangements and bilateral or multilateral political and security dialogue is undeniable in preventing or settling armed conflicts.

In this connection, I was deeply moved by and heartily welcome the historic signing of the declaration of principles for Palestinian interim self-government by the Israelis and the Palestinians. I pay a sincere tribute to their political leaders for taking this courageous step. It is essential that the international community support this agreement actively and promptly in order to realize peace in the region. Japan will continue to play a constructive role in the multilateral negotiations that are part of the peace process. I am pleased on this occasion to announce Japan's intention to extend about $200 million in assistance to the Palestinians over the coming two years. This assistance will include grant aid for food and medicine and concessional loans for infrastructure.

Humanitarian considerations, particularly respect for human rights, are inseparable from the issue of peace. Where there is war, human rights are often neglected. Conversely, in countries where respect for human rights has been firmly established, hostilities are less likely to break out. Japan must actively contribute to the solution of humanitarian problems. I would like to see my fellow countrymen and women roll up their sleeves and work side by side with people from many other countries, whenever and wherever humanitarian activities are called for.

The third area of focus is economic development as a foundation for peace-building. Today, the market economy has become a common language in most nations of the world, including many of the former socialist States. The development of the global economy based on principles of market economy should be urgently promoted. Japan and other industrialized nations must provide support to developing countries in their development efforts, as well as to former socialist countries in their political and economic reform efforts. It goes without saying that assistance to countries in transition must not come at the expense of aid to developing countries.

Already the world's top donor of official development assistance in absolute terms, Japan recently established its Fifth Medium-Term Target to further expand such assistance. Japan intends to provide official development assistance totalling between $70 billion and $75 billion over the five-year period beginning in 1993. As part of its aid efforts, two weeks ago Japan hosted, in Tokyo, the Third Mongolia Assistance Group Meeting. Next week, in cooperation with the United Nations, we will hold the International Conference on African Development in Tokyo.

The fourth item I would like to address concerns global issues such as the environment and population. The urgent need to solve the problems of the global environment cannot be overemphasized. Japan is willing to assume a leading role in international efforts to tackle environmental problems. In so doing, we will draw upon the experience and know-how we have gained in overcoming serious pollution problems at home. Not only is Japan developing new technologies for environmental protection, it is taking the lead in transferring such technologies to developing countries through the International Environmental Technology Centre of the United Nations Environment Programme, which was set up in Japan last year. At the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Japan pledged approximately $7 billion to $7.7 billion in environment-related official development assistance over the five years beginning 1992. In fact, Japan has already implemented more than one fourth of that amount.

Population problems often lead to poverty and famine. Solving these problems is therefore crucial to the goal of sustainable development and will require a broad-based approach including education and public information efforts. With these thoughts in mind, Japan will sponsor a meeting of eminent persons on population and development next January, prior to the International Conference on Population and Development to be held in Cairo next year.

The year 1995 will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. Since the birth of this Organization immediately following the Second World War, the international climate has changed dramatically. In the meantime, United Nations membership has grown from 51 States in 1945 to the present 184. Today, the international community is placing ever- higher expectations on the United Nations. But serious reform efforts are necessary if the United Nations is to respond to these expectations and meet the new demands awaiting us at the threshold of the next century.

I would like to comment on three specific areas in which reforms are necessary - namely, peace-keeping, the structure of the Security Council, and United Nations administration and finance.

Last year, Japan enacted the International Peace Cooperation Law enabling it to contribute personnel to United Nations peace-keeping operations. Since then, it has dispatched Japanese personnel to Angola, Cambodia and Mozambique. Japan intends to continue to promote such cooperation in the future.

Among recent United Nations peace-keeping operations, the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) stands out as a major achievement. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep respect for the efforts of UNTAC personnel and all the countries concerned. The success of the operation in Cambodia owes much to the comprehensive framework for peace that was put in place and the support it received from the international community. I am convinced that its experience in Cambodia will provide the United Nations with useful insights for its future activities.

Ensuring the security of the personnel engaged in United Nations peace-keeping operations is a task of high

priority to the international community, and I hope this issue will be the subject of thorough debate at the current session of the General Assembly. Other issues demanding our attention are the need to determine a so-called "sunset" for each peace-keeping operation to evaluate each operation properly and to review strictly the activities of an existing operation in deciding whether to extend its mandate. Japan also strongly hopes that the Peace-keeping Reserve Fund, which was established last year, will be fully funded and used effectively.

The sharp increase in the number of regional conflicts has meant a dramatic expansion of the role of the Security Council. Accordingly, it is necessary that the functions of the Council, which has the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, be strengthened. It is important that those countries having both the will and the adequate capacity to contribute to world prosperity and stability be actively engaged in that effort. The views expressed by many Member States, including our own, in response to a General Assembly resolution on this subject last year, generally indicate the need to expand the membership of the Security Council, while ensuring that its effectiveness is maintained. Japan intends to participate constructively in the discussion on Security Council reform.

Today the United Nations finds itself in extremely serious financial straits. In particular, the rapid expansion of peace-keeping operations has made it increasingly difficult for this Organization to meet its financial needs promptly. Without adequate financial resources, the United Nations would be powerless to engage in any activity, no matter how meaningful it may be. I would like to remind all United Nations Member States how important it is that they face this reality and fulfil their obligations.

At the same time, I note with concern the frequent allegations of inefficiency or wastefulness at the United Nations. I hope the United Nations will make the utmost efforts to meet the need for greater financial discipline and effective budgetary control.

Japan is prepared to do all it can to discharge its responsibilities in a United Nations reformed with the previous three points taken into account.

When the forerunner of the United Nations, the League of Nations, was established in 1920, the renowned Japanese educator Mr. Inazo Nitobe was appointed as one of its Deputy Secretaries-General. Mr. Nitobe, who had sought to introduce Japan's philosophical traditions to the world, remarked that the Japanese place great value on moral principles. I would like to conclude my address by offering a quote from one of Mr. Nitobe's lectures which reflects my own view on the evolving bonds between Japan and the international community:

> "An international mind is not the antonym of a national mind ... The international mind is an expansion of the national mind, just as philanthropy or charity ... should begin at home."

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I thank the Prime Minister of Japan for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Morihiro Hosokawa, Prime Minister of Japan, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. FILALI (Morocco) (*interpretation from Arabic*): It gives me pleasure, at the outset, to extend to you the congratulations of the delegation of Morocco on your election to the Presidency of the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly, and to express to you our best wishes for success in the discharge of your important duties. I would like to assure you of our full cooperation in ensuring the success of our deliberations.

To the outgoing President, Mr. Stoyan Ganev, I should like to express our appreciation for the wise manner in which he conducted the work of our deliberations during the past session. To our Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, we would like to pay a special tribute for his tireless efforts to uphold the principles of the United Nations Charter, and to promote international peace and security in the world's current difficult circumstances.

I should also like to welcome to our midst the many new Members who have joined our Organization in recent months.

As we approach the end of fifth decade since the establishment of our Organization, it is proper to evaluate its successes in attaining the goals set by the Conference of San Francisco in 1945, with a view to maintaining world peace and security and ensuring development, prosperity and social justice in a world free from the scourges of war, bigotry and racism.

Our Organization was built on the ruins of a World War. It was therefore natural that the effects of that war's aftermath left their imprint not only on the United Nations

Charter but also on the rules that govern its work as well as on its structure.

The rivalry between the two blocs contributed to the weakening of the effectiveness of the Organization in addressing international issues. However, to do justice to our Organization, one cannot but speak of its historic achievements in liberating people from the yoke of colonialism and foreign domination, its opening of its forums to dialogue between all nations, promoting cooperation between nations and peoples and its working for the settlement of conflicts by peaceful means.

The end of the cold war, the collapse of what used to be called the Eastern Bloc and the sudden disintegration of the Soviet Union, were important and unexpected events of historic proportions. They transformed the world situation and altered its parameters. The result was a radical change in international relations, a profound shift in the balance of power and the emergence of underlying ethnic and national extremist trends which were suppressed under the former rule. Those have brought civil wars, unspeakable tragedies, suffering and destruction to many countries.

While it has been difficult under such circumstances to find quick solutions to the old problems of the world as some would have hoped, new issues have arisen that have monopolized the attention of the international community, demonstrating the inadequacy of the means available to the United Nations and the United Nations inability to keep pace with the changes on the international scene.

The often-sought intervention by the United Nations in areas as diverse as the peaceful settlement of conflicts and the organization and supervision of elections has resulted in an increase in its volume of work and has justified the call for the strengthening of the Organization and support for its work. Consolidating the role of our Organization is of great importance and enjoys the steady support of my country.

Positive, vital and commendable as it may be, the role of the Organization remains, nevertheless, of limited impact and effectiveness because the Organization's Charter and structure have not evolved sufficiently and because it lacks the financial resources that would enable it to meet the requirements of its international mandates in all their various aspects.

Those transformations have given rise to new concepts, notions and priorities, such as preventive diplomacy, post-conflict peace-building, and brought to the fore such issues as those of human rights and of intervention on humanitarian grounds in the course of the ongoing global debate on what is termed "the new world order" that is in the making.

Moreover, the Summit meeting of the Security Council, held in January 1992 in New York, was a testimony to a common ambition to develop and regulate international action in such a way as to make it capable of meeting the requirements of the new situation in the world. As a current member of the Security Council, Morocco - represented by His Majesty King Hassan II - took part in that historic meeting and did not fail to express the sensitivities and concerns of the Muslim, Arab and African world, and contribute fully in the formulation of the final declaration.

It is also in this context that the Secretary-General presented his thoughts and recommendations about peacemaking and peace-keeping in his report "Agenda for Peace", which was favorably received by Member States. We believe that those thoughts, concepts and activities are a positive endeavour on the whole, but they contain certain aspects which might prove to be dangerous and even damaging. It is therefore imperative that those thoughts and concepts be clarified, with a view to defining their goals through an all-embracing dialogue between all States. This would lead to a consensus genuinely reflecting the concerns of all members of the international community.

It is also necessary, now, to supplement those thoughts with views and reflections on how to correct the economic situation which does injustice to the rights of the developing world, whose economic interests have not been included in the international agenda.

Nowadays, human rights issues are the subject of heated debate. Morocco, which firmly believes in the universal character and the comprehensive nature of those rights, regards them as a basic pillar of governance, social justice and civil liberties in any State. However, my country is equally of the view that the concept of human rights should be attuned to the values, cultures, traditions and the differing levels of development of countries, without any imposition of any particular concept of such rights. In other words, the political dimension of human rights should not prevail over the social and economic one, which covers the basic needs of man including food, clothing, health care and shelter.

Our constant interest in and tireless efforts towards maintaining international peace and security and the

settling of conflicts by peaceful means will be futile so long as the socioeconomic imbalance between the developed and developing countries continues to increase daily. The economic crises in the developing world have been greatly aggravated: unemployment and economic stagnation have been compounded by persisting problems in international trade, by foreign debt and by falling prices for raw materials. Morocco deplores the lack of genuine dialogue between the North and the South, which has created a situation in which sub-Saharan Africa claims less than 1 per cent of the world's income while the developed countries, with only 15 per cent of the world's population, control more than 80 per cent of world income.

The discussions in international economic forums are almost exclusively centered on topics of direct concern to developed countries while the role of developing nations in the management of the world economy continues to be almost non-existent. In that respect, we regret that the request made by the current chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement to meet with the leaders of the G-7 last July in Tokyo, to explain the consequences of the present management of the world economy on the developing countries, was turned down.

My country is convinced that unless the world economy is collectively managed in a manner that would take into account the interests of all countries without exception, it would be futile to look forward to an era in which global peace and security may prevail, and in which well-being and prosperity may be attained by all peoples of the world.

While we concede that the advanced countries too face a difficult economic situation, we maintain that they still have the potential and the ability to lend a helping hand to the developing world.

We also maintain that the time has come for the developed countries to demonstrate true solidarity with the developing countries by giving them access to the economic decision-making process, and by helping them to develop their economies and improve their social standards. To this end, the developed countries could liberalize the world economy, open their markets to the products of the Third World, increase their investments in developing countries alleviate the debt-burden of those countries and enhance the effective transfer of technology to them.

By the same token, we believe it is necessary for world economic relations to embark upon a new phase of genuine partnership and shared responsibility, within the context of economic interdependence.

Such a new approach would prove much more beneficial to the countries of the North since deterioration of the economic and social situation in the South would inevitably have a negative impact on the security, stability and development of the North.

While calling for a meaningful contribution by countries of the North to development, the countries of the South remain mindful of the need for self-dependence. Therefore most countries of the South have made the necessary adjustments, strengthened the structures of their economies and enhanced cooperation among themselves, by using available forums such as the Group of 77 and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Morocco, which has always demonstrated its utmost readiness to promote South/South cooperation, is still committed to participate actively in these efforts, in particular with the African countries. Our keen interest in Africa stems naturally from solid bonds of common history, goals and destiny which link us to that continent whose concerns and ambitions we fully share.

The lack of stability that characterizes the international economic situation led the African continent to a very alarming crisis which has been exacerbated by the falling prices of raw materials, a deterioration in the terms of trade, the heavy foreign debt-burden and drought.

Despite the adoption by the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly of a new agenda for the development of Africa and the new reform programme adopted by the majority of African countries in conformity with the recommendations of the international financial institutions, the situation in our continent remains critical and calls for an exceptional effort to overcome this crisis.

In this context, Morocco spares no effort to assist many African countries, for example, by writing off loans, extending valuable assistance in the areas of health care and education, and allocating more than 90 per cent of its international cooperation budget to the assistance of African countries.

Mr. Marker (Pakistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Moreover, Morocco has endeavoured, in consultation with other African countries bordering the Atlantic Ocean, to set up, in collaboration with the United Nations and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), a legal framework and relevant structures to create multilateral cooperation in the field of fisheries in order to safeguard the vital interests and national resources of these countries.

The present is a crucial period of transition in the history of international relations, which, while it is marked by new and promising prospects of international cooperation, is fraught with the danger of the many hotbeds of tension which proliferate around the world and which give cause for concern.

The Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina is in the grip of a devastating war that irks the world conscience. This has been the result of the Serbian aggression against the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bosnian Serbs especially have not hesitated to perpetrate the crimes of genocide, ethnic cleansing, rape, and the destruction of houses of worship and historical and cultural monuments in furtherance of their shameful designs, in violation of the principles and norms of international law.

It is regrettable that the many settlement plans and the endless meetings have resulted in nothing other than rewarding the Serbian aggressor and increasing pressure on the Muslim majority of that country. Having been unjustly deprived of the legitimate right to self-defence, the Bosnian Government had to make successive unilateral concessions.

The Kingdom of Morocco cannot but strongly condemn the Serbian aggression aimed at the dismemberment of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a Member State of the Organization. It profoundly deplores the inertia of the international community and the inability of the United Nations to ensure proper compliance with and implementation of the principles enshrined in the Charter and in international law, those principles which have been repeatedly recalled in resolutions, often adopted under Chapter VII, by the Security Council.

Somalia has recently experienced a cruel and destructive civil war which led to a dreadful famine that decimated tens of thousands of its people. A multilateral humanitarian rescue operation was launched with the aim of promoting national reconciliation and restoring the rule of law and the good functioning of government institutions.

Morocco was one of the first countries to show its active solidarity with that sisterly African country in the framework of a multilateral humanitarian mission. My country sent an important military contingent to alleviate the suffering of the Somali people. In this context, Morocco volunteered to set up a complete military hospital in which more than 100,000 patients have received treatment.

Unfortunately, we have recently seen the situation in Somalia change as a result of deadly confrontations that have claimed numerous lives. While deploring these tragic developments and condemning these reprehensible acts, we remain convinced that the solution to the Somali crisis hinges on continued negotiation and dialogue between all the parties, with the assistance of the United Nations, in order to achieve a genuine national reconciliation that would ensure peace, security and prosperity for our brethren in Somalia.

Angola remains in the grip of a destructive civil war despite the peace agreement between the Government of Angola and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), which agreement was supported by the international community and the United Nations Organization. Inspired by its solidarity with the Angolan people, and determined to promote peace and security in this part of Africa, the Kingdom of Morocco, on several occasions has assisted the two parties in resolving outstanding problems through dialogue and negotiation. As a member of the Security Council, Morocco has voted in favour of all resolutions on this issue in the hope that the two parties would implement the Abidjan protocol, prepared with the help of the United States of America, the Russian Federation and Portugal, so that an end could be put to the cycle of war and destruction, and thus allow Angola to usher in an era of peace, security and stability.

In South Africa, the cycle of violence continues to claim innocent victims. This must not slow down or side-track the democratic process or the current efforts aimed at transforming South Africa into a democratic, united and non-racial State. It is a source of satisfaction that the process of constitutional reform is proceeding despite the bloody acts of provocation perpetrated by extremists from various sides.

Morocco, which has always encouraged dialogue between the parties concerned, wants to express its satisfaction at the establishment of a transitional Executive Council. We are hopeful that the parties will continue the dialogue and the process of reconciliation.

Moreover, Morocco supports the appeal of Mr. Nelson Mandela, made before the Special Committee against Apartheid on 24 September 1993, for the lifting of the economic sanctions against South Africa. We are convinced that such an action will result in alleviating the economic burdens borne by the people of South Africa and will thus contribute to resolving their internal and external problems and give new momentum to the settlement process.

Two weeks ago, the Middle East entered a new era as a result of the mutual recognition between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel, and the signing of an agreement allowing for a regime of self-rule, initially in the Gaza Strip and Jericho.

Those two historic events have had a great impact on the situation in the Middle East, as this is the first time that the Palestinian and the Israeli sides have officially and publicly expressed their willingness to coexist and to recognize one another.

Despite the strong impact of those two events, Morocco believes that the path to a genuine, comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict is still long and that patience and perseverance are required in order to circumvent the many obstacles and difficulties that beset the process.

This first decisive step should be strengthened and should be accompanied by a good measure of progress in the other bilateral negotiations. A real solution in the Middle East can be achieved only if the momentum for peace is allowed to run its full course and reach its goal with the consent of all the peoples of the region.

To shoulder these responsibilities at this crucial and historical juncture, it is necessary to mobilize all efforts and to bring together all people of goodwill in order to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement that would be acceptable to all parties. Such a settlement should restore to the Palestinian people their rights, including their right to an independent State on their soil with Jerusalem as its capital. It should also ensure the withdrawal of Israel from the other occupied Arab territories in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, in conformity with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978).

Only then can the Middle East, afflicted by war, violence and tragedies for more than half a century, enter upon an era of peace, security, disarmament, stability and cooperation between all the States of the region; this would bring about development, welfare and prosperity.

In the Maghreb subregion, the Kingdom of Morocco firmly believes in the principles that formed the foundation of the Arab Maghreb Union; we adhere to the goals of the Union. We are firmly convinced that the future of the region and the prosperity of its peoples, linked as they are by history, language, religion and a common destiny, depend on the achievement of that unity.

The Arab Maghreb Union has recently encountered some difficulties and obstacles. This, in our view, is only natural. However, we are determined to overcome such difficulties and to go forward in order to fulfil the ambition of the Maghreb people to build an effective structure of cooperation and solidarity for themselves.

In the area of relations with the rest of the international community, Morocco and the other members of the Arab Maghreb Union view with special importance their relations with countries of the European Community on the one hand, and with its member States on an individual or Mediterranean basis on the other. The results achieved within the framework of dialogue and cooperation among countries bordering the Mediterranean are encouraging. We hope therefore that the current difficulties, which have prevented the resumption of that dialogue, will be overcome soon in order to promote a balanced regional cooperation between the northern and southern flanks of the Western Mediterranean.

With regard to the so-called question of the Western Sahara, the Settlement Plan is being implemented, and the Secretary-General continues to bring all new developments to the attention of the Security Council. The Kingdom of Morocco, which has always cooperated with the Secretary-General and striven to facilitate his mission, has given its consent in principle to the compromise he proposed in the interpretation and application of the criteria for voter eligibility. We are confident that the Secretary-General will not fail to inform the Security Council of Morocco's sincere and loyal cooperation and our constant readiness to implement the provisions of resolution 809 (1993) in all its aspects. It was in the same spirit of cooperation and reconciliation that Morocco agreed to the Laayoune meeting of last July where Sahrawis, in particular, from within the territory and from the region of Tindouf, took part and initiated a brotherly and positive dialogue.

A close examination of conditions prevailing in the world as we stand on the threshold of the next century

would clearly show that the strivings of humanity in the areas of world peace, justice and welfare fall short of the hopes it set out to realize and that the challenges in the way of meeting those goals are still difficult and numerous.

What is most needed now is a new code of conduct for international relations, a code that would take into account the concerns of all peoples and countries of the world, restore balance to international dealings and bring the principles of justice and partnership to the management of world affairs. We hold the view that the United Nations is the most suitable forum for discussions on this issue and for attaining our common goals.

The PRESIDENT: We have heard the last speaker in the general debate for this meeting.

The meeting rose at 1.35 p.m.